



ST. BONAVENTURE UNIVERSITY

Commencement Exercises 2009

St. Bonaventure University

Sunday, May 17, 2009, 10:30 a.m., Reilly Center Arena

Undergraduate Student Address by ELLEN GRIMES, '09

Sister President, Honored Guests, Members of the Board of Trustees, Faculty, Families, and members of the Class of 2009:

“We like it here. We love it here. We finally found a home. A what? A home, a home, a home away from home.”

These are the words we so tenderly had to recite for our parents as we left our Bonaventure orientation sessions in the summer of 2005. Now at that moment, we were all very hot, very tired, and from what I remember by looking around Murphy Auditorium that day, not too enthusiastic about reciting these words in our Gatorade-themed T-shirts.

Four years later as we all sit here together, I think that it is pretty safe to assume that our class would gladly proclaim this statement together, especially on the “Bona bus” late at night; this would be a very easy task. The amount of growth and transition that we have all made during our time here is truly amazing. We all love Bonaventure and are not afraid to show our love to the world.

A few weeks back, I was sitting down with a small group of seniors and a few University Ministries members discussing what distinguishes this class from all of the rest. What we were able to agree on unanimously was the fact that our class most stands out for our care, compassion, and love for others.

I have never before in my life seen a more motivated group of people come together for the sake of the betterment of life. The growth and accomplishments of BonaResponds alone, which was founded in the weeks after Hurricane Katrina during the year we were freshmen, sets this class above any other. However, we were not going to stop there. Students In Free Enterprise, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program, Bona Buddies, and the newest endeavor formed by members of our class, Embrace It Africa, have helped and will continue to help hundreds of thousands of people. The fact that this list is not all-inclusive, makes me even prouder to say that I am a member of the Class of 2009.

Graduation is often a time of uneasiness about what the future holds for us and how confident we feel about our ability to rise to the challenges. But, I know for a fact that we will do great things and be truly proud of ourselves and our classmates. All of these accomplishments are not only a testament to our class's nature, but are a mirror of what our own successes will look like some day.

Here is what I'd like you all to remember: please make yourself and your well being a priority. When you're in the midst of your career hunt, please do not let money be the only motivation...it's not very Franciscan. Your personal worth and value can never be surpassed by any other measure. No matter where we are later on in our lives and no matter what we do, we need to make an obligation to ourselves to make sure that we always love what we do and that we do it with love. Everything else will without a doubt fall into place.

The sense of common purpose that this university exudes is regularly recognized by the world outside of our "Bona Bubble". Here's what a local news writer said about it:

"The Bonaventure Bond is arguably tighter than at most schools. There's no med school, no research facility, no nearby big city to escape to. The glue that binds students through frigid winters is equal parts academic, basketball and beer. That's why a horde of alumni stay in touch long after their paths diverge."

This quote from a Buffalo News columnist is something we can all relate to as we look toward the future.

I find great comfort in knowing that we are going to be those alumni coming back home to meet one another. Our making of memories with one another will not end as we say our goodbyes today — there are many more that are sure to come.

This Bonaventure experience would not have been the same without each and every one of you. Thank you all for being here to share this most joyous occasion.

My sincerest congratulations to the St. Bonaventure Class of 2009.

Ms. Grimes is a marketing major from Clinton, N.Y. She is vice president for the Class of 2009, a member of the women's rugby team, is in the Pacioli Scholars Program for the School of Business and has been a resident assistant for the past three years. She has been a member of Concert Choir and Chamber Singers since her freshman year, is the president of SBU's music ministry and was a First Year Mentor in the School of Business. Ms. Grimes, daughter of Patrick and Barbara Grimes, is a graduate of Clinton Senior High School.